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SUBJECT: JOINT MONUC-FARDC PATROL SUCCESSFUL AGAINST FDLR

¶1. (U) MONUC and FARDC units carried out joint patrols October 7-10 in and around the village of Mpofi, 45 kilometers east of Walikale Town in North Kivu. Limited access to the remote area has encouraged the presence of FDLR ("Forces democratiques pour la liberation de Rwanda" in French) and other armed groups who have engaged in illegal taxation and mining, looting and extortion. The aim of the operation was to demonstrate a joint MONUC/FARDC presence in the "hinterland" and conduct sensitization operations to encourage FDLR participation in the DDRRR (disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration, and resettlement) process. In addition, the action opened the Sake-Mushake axis, an important supply route for the Walikale region.

¶2. (U) The joint-force patrol used Mpofi as a base and conducted patrols in the neighboring villages of Kigoma and Kembe. MONUC reports the patrols encountered eight FDLR members who were interviewed by MONUC DDRRR personnel accompanying the patrol. FDLR elements abandoned two road blocks as a result of the patrols.

¶3. (U) According to MONUC, the local population welcomed the joint operation as a means to improve security and protect the area against armed groups. MONUC noted that the operation was a tangible expression to extend state authority to remote areas of the country.

(Note: A copy of MONUC's report on the operation was forwarded to AF/C and Embassy Kigali. End note.)

¶4. (SBU) Comment: This action was not a military operation per se. However, within the context of recent combat between FARDC and CNDP and Rwandan accusations of FARDC/FDLR collaboration (at least one instance of which has been corroborated by MONUC), it may help demonstrate GDRC commitment to Operation Kimia and the broader Nairobi process.

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